231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road
491 network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
● 433 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons, [12]

11. EuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 • Ethiopia MP1

3

The World of the Amhara Peasant

The life of the peasantry has been a constant setting for the Amhara drama. It is the faithful pedal point against which the ups and downs of Ethiopian history have been played. We cannot savor that history fully without becoming closely acquainted with the peasant himself.

If understanding the peasantry is important for a truer picture of the Abyssinian past, it is indispensable for a sensible approach to Ethiopia's future. Ethiopia is and will remain for a long time a predominantly agricultural nation, one whose exports—chiefly coffee, skins, and oilseeds—depend almost exclusively on rural output. The one economist to have discussed the problem at any length in print maintains that agriculture is the one area in which Ethiopia can reasonably expect significant economic development in the foreseeable future.[1] Conscious efforts to stimulate peasant productivity, however, may issue in stagnation or even setbacks if they are not based on a realistic understanding of the peasants' own attitudes and conditions of life.

Ethiopians who are striving to modernize their country have for the most part lost touch with the peasantry. If they were born and raised in one of the cities, they may have had no direct contact with the peasantry at all. If their origins are rural, they have been oriented all their school days toward gaining a modern education and tend, wittingly or not, to ignore what they can of their past. Nor are they helped much in this regard by foreign technical experts, who tend to have a modernist bias and typically know still less about the indigenous peasantry. Understanding of the peasantry by scholars, on the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5

THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that characterizes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The governmental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratification.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal followings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Westernized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approximately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military force, and economic advance.*

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been continuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

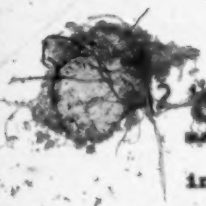
361
592
613
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
• [433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder



[illegible] are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 463 The People of the Town. Approximately three-quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam province. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (zibaña) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

162 632 463 433 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women. A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of local Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

17 Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

162
632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

441 The Alternative Career Paths. In choosing between
[869] material and professional interests, some men forsake
*[793] their erstwhile ecclesiastical goals altogether, to ap-
ply in secular occupations (particularly as scribes and
merchants) the skills that they have acquired or perfec-
*[192] ted during their student days. Exemplary among these is
the kibe (butter) merchant. Occasionally, profits ac-
cumulated by gathering and begging are invested in the
purchase of lowland butter and the means for transporting
it to highland markets. Profits earned from kibe trading
are sometimes sufficient to promise a standard of living
which exceeds that of the peasants with whom the student
trades. The student who yields to the temptations of a
full-time trading career generally establishes an annual
cycle in which a portion of his kibe profits are reinves-
ted in livestock for subsequent sale at regional markets.

*793 A second category of students reverses these priori-
869 ties, and disregards non-ecclesiastical goals altogether.
• 433 Such students believe that, for themselves, it is faith
in the Almighty which must sustain them in their tra-
vail. Thus, even excursions into the lowlands are re-
*[192] placed by exclusively ecclesiastical activities. Sub-
sistence needs are met by copying Church books for re-
sale, participating in the Mass in return for a por-
tion of the grain tithes given to the church, and dining
at baptisms and annual memorial feasts (fehitat). In

addition, he blesses houses against ganels with readings from appropriate books of the Church, and sprinkles the house with water he has sanctified with his reading and spittle.

Finally, there is the largest category of students, those who choose the path of compromise and abinet. It is from their ranks that the debtera-healer emerges.

THE ABINET WORKS: PROPHYLAXIS AND THERAPY

Abinet are a class of recondite works directed at the satisfaction of some personal desire; their efficacy is obtained wholly or in large measure by invoking the assistance of super-humans (most often of the Church, but sometimes ganels), usually in contexts beyond those permitted by the Church. Abinet subjects include therapeutic performances (medhaniyt ina digam), and prophylactic amulets (kitab), divinatory texts (awdunigist), academic (timhirt) abinet, other inoffensive commercial works destructive works sending sickness and other misfortunes (kifat), and techniques for forcing the appearance and cooperation of ganels (ganel gelac).

Table eight indicates the constituent techniques of each category of abinet. The remaining paragraphs of this section consider those abinet works which address the therapeutic and prophylactic interests of the deb-